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THE INFLUENCE OF RACE ON ART.*

THE relationship of race to art is part of a larger subject, the connection of organization with mental manifestations, a great problem, involving in its profounder bearings some of the most important questions which can be submitted to our investigation. As a sphere of almost untried inquiry it opens up to us vast realms of possibility, in which the discoveries of exact science have yet to supersede the vague and unsatisfactory hypothesis of ill-informed speculation. In truth it is a province of vast extent, and with manifold subdivisions. Descending on one side to the minute specialties of individual development, as expounded by the phrenologists, it ascends on the other to the effect of racial type on national character. Nor does it stop here. For if organization be a reliable index of mental power, then are we enabled, through its aid, to pass beyond the limits of our own especial form of being, and, guided by their structure, proceed to admeasure the qualities and capabilities of the various genera, orders, and classes which compose the manifold gradations of the animal kingdom. Indeed till this has been accomplished comparative anatomy will be imperfect, and lack its crowning glory, as a revealer of beauty and harmony—not only in the organic, but also in the mental sphere as correlated to it. Without, however, at present entering into this department of the subject, which would indeed ultimately lead us up into the metaphysical region of abstract thought, where mind and matter, God and nature, constitute the subject of debate, we shall not perhaps be thought to unduly transcend the appropriate limits of this journal by a few remarks on racial type and mental power.

The venerable controversy respecting the effects of nature and education seems to be of almost world-old antiquity, and men, according to their several proclivities, have arranged themselves on the one side or the other, and probably on each have carried their respective views to excess. The savans, perhaps, exaggerating the importance of natural endowment, have somewhat undervalued the influence of

* History of Modern Architecture; with an Appendix on Ethnology from an Architectural Point of View. By James Fergusson. London: John Murray, 1862. 12mo, pp. 538.

circumstances, while the scholars altogether overestimating the force of circumstances have practically ignored the existence of inherent powers and disqualifications. And thus it has come to pass that history is what we find it, for the bookmen have hitherto possessed the monopoly of its composition, and have accordingly converted it into a chronicle of events, whereto the actors are regarded as quite subordinate accessories. Many signs, however, indicate that the days of this pleasant pedantry are ended, and that the time has come for looking the facts of race fairly in the face. Indeed the very revolutions and wars with which we are cotemporary, bring the question of hereditary type and character so forcibly into view, that not only are able editors becoming smartly ethnological in their leaders, but venerable statesmen and astute diplomatists are beginning to admit that the decisions of cabinets are not the sole influences which modify the destiny of nations. And, accordingly, in addition to their own sage opinion as to the fitness of things from the court standpoint, are prepared to regard racial tendency as one of the active and influential forces in the political scheme. Nor can this idea fail to grow, for it is supported by the whole past and the entire present of our race. Whether we regard the grander divisions or the minor varieties of man, it is found that type has combined with circumstances to modify civilization, and give it a character not simply geographical, but also racial. Thus no one at all acquainted with history and antiquities would expect the devout Semites to exhibit characteristics identical with those of the intellectual Aryans; nor will any one familiar with the latter attempt to confound them with their religious converts, the Tamul peoples of the south. It is the same in Europe, where the ancient classic type stands broadly distinguished from Slavon or Teuton, as both of these, in an almost equal degree, are separated from the Celt. Nor are these distinctions perceived only by professed Ethnologists; they are equally seen and acted on by practical men, by the merchant in his adventures, the sailor in his voyages, and the soldier in his wars; and are indeed as well known to the simplest private as to his superior officers. Nay, it is practical men, not theorizing anthropologists, who are prone to carry out these distinctions into the rather stern and tyrannical result of caste, as we see wherever the negro and Caucasian, under whatever nominal relationship, actually meet face to face on the great highways of life. Nor can this be otherwise; for as diversity of race is a fact in nature, it will force an acknowledgment of its existence, whether from the most careless or most prejudiced,

provided they are only placed in circumstances where it is impossible to ignore the evidence of its presence. Neither were these ethnic differences first discovered in modern times; they were almost as familiar to the ancients, in so far as their knowledge extended, as to ourselves, and are at the present moment quite as much insisted on by barbarous tribes as by civilized nations.

It is not indeed the discovery, but the ignoring, of ethnic diversities which may be regarded as a modern invention. Antiquity never thought of confounding the races of men, and heathendom has never attempted it. They had no motive, their scheme of mythology did not require, and their social arrangements did not demand it. They did not believe, as a matter of faith, that all mankind were of one race; nor did they profess to enforce by law or sanction by custom a nominal equality, based on a real diversity. We in these latter times have been the victims of theory, in both respects; for we have fancied ourselves theologically bound by our creed to the profession of a racial unity, and by our social customs to the maintenance of an equality. It being apparently forgotten by all parties, theologians and socialists alike, that nature's scheme of being is not a democracy but a hierarchy, whose various grades are all distinctly marked and duly subordinated. An arrangement, commencing with suns and their systems, and descending to the minutest genera of organic existence, and which might, therefore, be legitimately expected in that grandest of nature's organic spheres, the races of man.

Perhaps another reason for the popular confusion of ideas on the subject of race now prevalent, is the fact that merely literary men seem to think themselves quite competent, if not to write works expressly on the subject, at least to review them, and pronounce flippant criticisms *ex cathedra* on topics of which they are about as well informed as of the effects of tangential and radial force, or any other of the more recondite departments of astronomy, which they would very properly leave to the professors of that especial province of inquiry. With the progress of anthropological science, however, this absurdity cannot fail to be ultimately corrected; but in the interval the conductors of our periodical literature do not seem to feel that there is the least necessity for placing ethnological works in the hands of duly qualified persons—if indeed such could be readily found. And the result is what we see, the great questions of racial origin, interaction, and relationship treated almost wholly from the theological and scholarly standpoint, biblical texts and philological affinities being employed with childlike confidence to settle disputes

which the profoundest study of mental characteristics and organic type has still left uncertain. All this, however, is but an inevitable accompaniment of the imperfect development of ethnology itself, which has yet scarcely vindicated its claim to be regarded as a science in general estimation.

With a full recognition of the reality of race, however, must come a proportionately frank admission of its importance. Once grant inherent diversity of endowment, and the inevitable result of this, in proportionate diversity of manifestation, cannot fail to follow as an unavoidable corollary, from which there is no escape. And to this, slowly yet surely, reluctantly yet under the resistless compulsion of fact and logic, the collective mind of civilization is determinately marching. It is, indeed, a bourne at which all duly qualified thinkers have already arrived, and the ultimate conversion of the lettered million is now merely a question of time. Within ethnological circles, indeed, the right to treat religious, political, literary, and artistic questions racially is unchallenged, the only opposition to such a procedure being from outsiders, whose antiquated prejudices may be very respectfully yet very decidedly ignored. That every distinctly marked type of humanity tends to develop its own creed and code, its peculiar faith and institutions, its specially characterized modes of thought and forms of beauty, is now denied by none but those whose opinions on such a subject are justly devoid of importance. For few things are more thoroughly insignificant than the decisions of ignorance blindly echoing the traditional errors of an outworn past, in a vain endeavour to control the direction and limit the range of modern thought by the senile voice of ancient authority.

Any attempt at a full definition of all the effects of race would yet, however, be premature. We want more reliable data than any that are yet in our possession, for the successful achievement of so great a design, for the effective realization of so grand an idea, to which, therefore, we can only make a remote and tentative approach, which, if it land us anywhere nearer the goal must be regarded in so far as a success. Ere we can treat of religion, for example, from the ethnological standpoint, we want to know more, not only of the mental constitution of races, but of the succession and development of faiths, than scholars are qualified to give, or the world is prepared to receive. It is the same with those other departments of inquiry to which we have alluded, politics, literature, and art, all demanding more data for their ethnic illustration than cotemporary learning is able to supply. But while granting this, and thus admitting not only the

possibility but the probability of error, it is nevertheless well that we should occasionally attempt the solution of some of these grander racial problems, if only that we may be thus made more fully aware of our deficiencies, and see more clearly in what direction, and on what particular subjects we lack the information requisite for a more effective prosecution of our inquiries.

And here let us throw out a word of caution to ethnologists, as we have previously done to their rivals, the scholars. In the advocacy and exposition of a struggling truth we are prone not only to exaggerate its importance, but while doing so to proportionately undervalue everything else. Thus, for example, while dwelling with well-intentioned pertinacity on the effect of race upon the development of art, we are prone to overlook the influence of circumstances as manifested in the spirit of successive eras, forgetting that it is ever by a combination and interaction of the outward and the inward, of environment and endowment, that man attains to the condition in which he has at any time existed. Compare, for instance, the art of mediæval with that of modern Europe, and you see at once the stupendous power of extraneous influences in modifying the manifestations of artistic proclivity in the same race, who, under the inspiration of a faith favourable to æsthetic culture, covered Europe with cathedrals, while in the puritanic severity of their earlier Protestantism, they were equally contented to worship in barns. Facts like these should make us cautious in the assertion of racial influence, lest in the excess of our zeal we overstate the truth, and so prepare the way for a future reaction in public opinion unfavourable to the prosecution of those very studies which seem to us so all-important.

From what has been said in the previous pages, it will be obvious, that we think a work on ethnology, in relation to art, demands attainments seldom, perhaps never yet, united in the same person. And it will, therefore, not be esteemed a very severe verdict, when we say that Mr. Fergusson is utterly incompetent to the task which he has undertaken in the appendix to his last work, *The History of Modern Architecture*, wherein, under "ethnology from an architectural point of view," he exhibits a most lamentable ignorance of the very elements of ethnic science, and confounds names and races with a reckless audacity that shows only how little he has read, and how much he has yet to learn, on the subject. He commences in error, regarding the creation of *one* PERFECT pair at the beginning, as in the present state of our knowledge the most probable of all the suggestions yet offered for a solution of the problem of race; whereas

it is precisely the most difficult, whether as regards the element of unity or perfection, but with both together is, as an ethnic hypothesis, practically unworkable. He proceeds in error, for he considers that mankind began with civilization, and have degenerated into barbarism, in consequence of their separation from the parent stock. While in strict correspondence with this, he regards the highly inflectional Indo-Germanic languages, more especially in their purer Sanscrit forms, as a remnant of the *primitive* tongue; while all philologists know that they are essentially conglomerate, and imply from their very structure the previous existence of monosyllabic and non-inflectional languages. Just as all archæology takes us back to the stone period of primitive savagism as the original condition of untutored man, whose primal civilization in a paradisaical and golden age, is obviously one of those traditional myths that sooner or later must succumb before the stern teachings of demonstrable fact.

The foregoing, however, are perhaps not so much the speculations of Mr. Fergusson, as the accepted dogmata of the school in which he has learned his slender elements of ethnic lore. But it is quite otherwise with his nomenclature and arrangement of races; for here there is a specialty of misconception and misstatement, for which no recognized school of ethnologists can be held justly responsible. He arranges mankind into four divisions, thus:—

TURANIANS—SEMITES—CELTS—ARYANS,

embracing under the first, it might be supposed, all the non-Caucasian or imperfectly developed races; and under the three last all the varieties of the latter. But even this rude classification is beyond him, as his use of the word Turanian at once indicates. Admitting that as a generic term it includes the Tartars and Mongols proper, and so covers the Chinese, Tungouses, Magyars, Lapps, and Finns, he nevertheless proceeds to inform us, with all gravity, that the ancient Egyptians were the typical Turanians, who it seems, as Phœnicians, were also the builders of Solomon's Temple. Serious criticism is here obviously impossible, and we can only say that when a man of Mr. Fergusson's ability and general attainments, can venture to put such ideas into respectable print it certainly demonstrates that the Anthropological Society has not made its appearance before it was wanted.

Strange to say, Mr. Fergusson's fundamental misconception in connection with the Turanians is in relation to his own profession; for he regards them as the great master builders of the world. Now the pure or typical Turanian is a tented nomad, who at most heaps

a mound of earth upon the corpse of his departed chieftain; and, in strict accordance with this, his grander labours, even when settled in civilized and agricultural communities, are still earthworks, sometimes imposing for their extent, but never admirable for the taste or skill evinced in their erection. It is the Caucasian who is the builder, beginning with the cyclopean, advancing through the Egyptian, and ultimately attaining to the classical and gothic styles of true architecture. When the pure Mongol attempts a temple, it eventuates in a porcelain tower at Nankin, simply a series of tents in superposition. To speak of the Tamul architecture of Southern India as a veritable product of Turanian genius, is like citing the massive grandeur of the Rhameses, as a proof of the innate greatness of the negro. In neither case were the primitive peoples of Eastern Asia or Southern Africa masters of the situation; on the contrary, in both we may safely predicate the presence and predominance of Caucasian rulers as the producing cause of those monumental remains, which now characterise these distinctly marked areas of ancient civilization. The truth is the pure Mongol is never an artistic builder, except under Caucasian leadership, and we may add in obedience to Caucasian designs; and it need scarcely be added that the same remark applies with still greater force to the negro, whose palace is a cottage, and whose temple is a hut.

Mr. Fergusson is equally unfortunate in his remarks on the Semites, who it seems never erected a building worthy of the name; and yet their especial areas in Western Asia and Northern Africa are still among the most important monumental sites on the globe; while the Saracenic architecture of Spain is the admiration of the world. But when we remember that the author has spoken of the Egyptians and Phœnicians as Turanian peoples, it may be concluded that our difference of opinion with him on this subject is not as to facts but names. That the Semitic type has hitherto proved incapable of attaining to the highest form of æsthetic culture may be readily admitted, but it should be remembered that the Jews, who are obviously Mr. Fergusson's typical Semites, were never the artistic section of the race, being surpassed in this not only by the Egyptians and Assyrians, but also by their nearer congeners, the Syro-Phœnicians and (Saracenic) Arabs. It is the last, who were probably the purest and highest form of the race, that is the most nearly free from Mongolic taint on the one hand, and from Negroid admixture on the other, whose lithe and elastic frames, elevated features, and finely arched crania proclaim them of the pure blood of the desert, who

have carried Semitic art to its highest refinement, and developed a style that may well be regarded as the Mohammedan rival to the Christian Gothic.

But we have thus been brought to a test of race which Mr. Fergusson, in accordance with his scholastic training in ethnology, seems to utterly ignore—we mean organic type. It is from his neglect or ignorance of this that he has been led into his contradictions and absurdities respecting the Turanians. Had he possessed the slightest idea of the radical distinction between the Brachycephalic Mongol and the Dolichocephalic Negro, he would never have spoken of an African race as Turanian. Nor with the most rudimentary knowledge of what this epithet really means would he have applied it to the finely developed, oval-faced, and nervous traders of Tyre and Sidon. Such errors as those we have alluded to, however fatal to his speculations as an ethnologist, might indeed well be pardoned in one whose refined taste and profound knowledge in connection with his own majestic act, should effectually plead his excuse for lapses in every other. But our duty as the representatives of a scientific anthropology, and our loyalty to the truth, alike demand an unflinching exposure of the fallacies and absurdities of that school of pseudo-ethnology, whose disciples, guided by a few philological analogies and other scholastic data, have ventured to speak of the migrations and displacement of races with a confidence that would be simply ridiculous, were it not also seriously obstructive to the progress of sound knowledge. Let us clearly understand that man must be studied not simply in language, but in structure; and that in proportion as we neglect organic type we are on the certain road to error.

Mr. Fergusson is somewhat more at home with the Celts, perhaps because he knows them better; and had he spoken of them as he has done of the Turanians there would have been a much nearer approach to scientific truth than his work at present contains. To treat of the latter as especially susceptible of æsthetic culture is simply absurd; but in reference to the former the assertion is the embodiment of a great ethnic fact, of which history and archæology are alike demonstrative. If we enlarge the term, so as to make it embrace the classic nations of the south, as well as the Nervofibrous peoples of Western Europe, *fine* art may be said to constitute their especial appanage. The massive grandeur of the Egyptian style shows ideality laboriously and painfully struggling into manifestation, through the superincumbent pressure of a ponderous muscularity

of type, demanding a corresponding materiality of structure in its edifices. While in the architecture of India and the farther east, from the Buddhist and Jaina times to the epoch of the Mohammedan invasion, we see in the complexity and elaborateness of the decoration that toylike tendency which has ever characterized the smallheaded and nervous children of the Indus and the Ganges. That highest form of beauty, which demands only simplicity and purity, and that grandest phase of sublimity which depends on form and proportion rather than mass, were never seen in perfection till the Parthenon was placed on the Acropolis, and Phidias adorned it with the master-pieces of his genius.

The author's estimate of the Aryans has obviously been written from the English standpoint. Indeed he had better at once have called them Anglo-Saxons, for this is decidedly what he means. The gigantic practicability of the English mind, with which the world has been so superabundantly blessed within the last few generations, seems to have quite overmastered him; and he accordingly dwells with needlessly exaggerated force on the inductive and utilitarian tendencies of the plain speaking and common sense Aryans, who, unfortunately for the architectural world, have a most decided predilection for congregationalism and plain churches. Alas! indeed for the fine arts, wherever these hard-working, shipbuilding, road-making Aryans obtain the predominance. *Æsthetic* culture flies before them, while the viaduct supersedes the triumphal arch, and the whitewashed chapel takes the place of the gorgeous cathedral! No wonder Mr. Fergusson has slender faith in the art of the future. What indeed can be expected of a people wholly given up to spinning-jennies and power looms, and who prefer the profit derived from a red brick factory, with its smoking chimney, to all the unproductive glories of St. Peter's, and all the barren beauties of York Minster! What indeed is to become of mankind after the extinction of those great master builders, the Turanians, a catastrophe which it seems is more nearly impending than some soft-hearted philanthropists are willing to suppose, it is impossible to conceive. Our only hope will then be in the Celts, who are themselves, poor fellows! everywhere subordinated to these dreadful Aryans, to whom all edification, save that of making a fortune, is utterly abhorrent.

To be serious. Mr. Fergusson has mistaken the tendencies of an age for the characteristics of a race, and so attributed to the latter what is due solely to the former. Whether the Aryans proper erected temples in India or not, it is quite certain that the "Sanskrit speak-

ing" Greeks were the first artists in the world. And whether the English can or cannot erect tasteful and appropriate edifices now, it is demonstrable from existing remains, that they once enriched their country with abbeys and cathedrals, that are still the admiration of Christendom. Given a highly developed Caucasian race, richly endowed with creative power, susceptible to music, like the Germans, and capable of rising to the loftiest strains of dramatic and epic poetry like the English, and you have the elements out of which the purest and noblest art may at any time be evolved. But to nations as to individuals, there is a time for all things. We are the children of the inductive philosophy, and carried onward in the midway course of a materialistic and utilitarian era, we of necessity build steamships and construct railways; and as these are the best of their kind, so do they afford satisfactory evidence of a capacity, which wants but a higher and more spiritual inspiration to produce grander and more artistic results. When new temples are really wanted, that is when we have a living faith to put into them, Mr. Fergusson need not fear they will arise as by the wand of an enchanter, and cover the land with a grandeur and beauty of which no living artist has ever dreamed, and to which neither Grecian nor Gothic genius ever aspired.

Let us clearly understand this matter. Every style of architecture is but the manifestation of an idea; the temple is but the vesture of a faith. The stern power of the Osirian creed was befittingly reflected in the ponderous vastitude of Carnac. The grace and beauty of the Olympian deities, those glorious incarnations of all that is ideal and artistic in physical man and temporal life, found adequate expression in the harmonious proportions and faultless simplicity of a classic fane, that apt embodiment of finite thought and earthly aspiration; while the spiritual yearnings and heavenward tendencies of Christianity, with its overawing sense of the infinite and eternal, were befittingly mirrored in the dim vistas and far-stretching aisles, the lofty towers, and skyward pinnacles of a Gothic cathedral, that glorious symbol of the sublimity and severity, the grandeur and the gloom, of mediæval faith. Now, it is precisely because we lack a great inspiration of this kind that we have no architecture. We live under the eclipse of faith. Protestantism pulls down what Catholicism is too weak to build up. It is not among iconoclasts that true edification should be expected to prevail. It is on the flood tide of a new, not the ebb tide of an old creed, that humanity is borne to those altitudes of thought, where new and untried forms of beauty are revealed, as in beatific vision, to its rapt seers. From Britain

to Japan the world is in spiritual collapse. Everywhere the cry of desolation, the wail of despair, the groan of death, ascends from the deserted temple, whose priesthoods with difficulty repair the waste of time, and with failing hearts make a feeble show of resistance to their advancing and victorious foes. It is the twelfth hour of the night; and we must wait for the dawn, which will surely come, ere we can hope for the temple of humanity's glorious future, to become a realized fact among the things of time. In the interval we do well to reproduce classic or gothic piles, as temporal or spiritual occasions permit. Let us fully master the old, so perhaps shall we be better prepared to appreciate the new—when it is vouchsafed.

Let it not be supposed, from the rather severe tone of the foregoing remarks that we at all undervalue Mr. Fergusson's merits in his own department. As a writer on architecture his profound and extensive knowledge, combined with a naturally refined and cultured taste, eminently qualify him for his self-imposed task as the historian of the past, and the critic, if not the guide, of the present. But in venturing on ethnology he has entered on a domain of thought and knowledge for which his previous studies have but very imperfectly prepared him; and as a result, his remarks, however startling and ingenious, are utterly devoid of all scientific value, being based throughout on those misapprehensions which ever attach to the opinions of those who write on a subject which they have but imperfectly mastered. Let him not, however, despair even ethnologically. His superior talents, and vast attainments in his own particular sphere, may yet prove of immense service to anthropological science. We want his aid. There is an immense field of inquiry, where the properly qualified architect and engineer can alone efficiently aid us. We allude to the vast province of archæology. We want from the latter, both in his civil and military capacity, a careful survey and skilful restoration, both in plan and pictorial outline, of the great earthworks of the primæval and prearchitectural periods. We want him to afford us an estimate of the labour required, and the means employed for the effectuation of these stupendous remains of a prehistoric civilization. While from the former we need a similar restoration of all the more important architectural efforts of various ages and countries. Such a work might commence with the monolith and cromlech of the North-west of Europe and Southern India. Its second division should fully illustrate Cyclopean architecture in its successive stages, wherever found, whether around the Mediterranean area of the old, or amidst the tropical altitudes of the

new world. Its third chapter might embrace pyramidal erections, from the grandly sublime and finished masses of the Nile to the ruder teocallis of Mexico. Its fourth might be appropriately devoted to those caverned temples, where the taste and skill of early ages have stamped their lasting imprints on the living rock. And from this, emerging into architecture proper, we might, at a glance, survey the successive styles which have prevailed under Egyptian, Indian, Assyrian, Etruscan, Classic, Saracenic, and Gothic culture. For such a work Mr. Fergusson has peculiar qualifications. The materials must be largely in his possession, and in his Handbook of Architecture he has already approached to the fulfilment of the latter part of the idea. Thus, by a judicious application of the results of a life of study in his own branch, rather than by crude speculations on ethnology, to which he is incompetent, can he best serve the great science of man, and help us ultimately to some definite conclusions as to the effect of race on art.

CREATION OF MAN, AND SUBSTANCE OF THE MIND.*

By PROFESSOR RUDOLPH WAGNER.+

It was with some hesitation that I yielded to the repeated request of your worthy Secretary to deliver this address, a request backed by several eminent members. My friends were of opinion that a resident of this town, which you have honoured with your presence, should deliver the inaugural address, on some general scientific subject.

I have selected the science of man, that is anthropology, in its physical and psychical aspect, or rather a mere section of it, which, if I must give a name to my discourse, I shall term "Creation of Man and Substance of the Mind."

* An Anthropological Lecture, delivered at the first public meeting of the Thirty-First Assembly of German Naturalists and Physicians at Goettingen, Sept. 1854, by Professor Wagner of Goettingen.

+ Several passages touching on the supposed connection of the science of Man with historical Christianity and Revelation have not been translated, as these subjects have nothing to do with Anthropology. EDITOR.